

Preliminary New Year's Eve DUI Enforcement Results, Checkpoint Strikeforce & Safe Family Holiday Campaign Wrap Up

Dover – Thirty-nine (39) people were arrested New Year's Eve weekend for Driving Under the Influence (DUI) of alcohol and/or drugs according to preliminary reports from state and local law enforcement agencies and the Office of Highway Safety. Officers conducted sobriety checkpoints in Rehoboth, Clayton, Wilmington, and Newport along with over 100 DUI saturation patrols statewide.

In addition to the 39 DUI arrests, officers issued 10 citations for underage drinking violations, apprehended 7 wanted individuals, made 23 drug arrests, made 4 felony arrests, and issued 23 seat belt citations, 4 child restraint citations, 6 cell phone citations and 49 citations for various other criminal violations.

New Year's Eve also signaled the end of the 2011 *Checkpoint Strikeforce* and *Safe Family Holiday* campaigns. With the 39 DUI arrests from New Year's Eve weekend, that brings the total number of people arrested for DUI as part of the two campaigns to 490. That is 96 less DUI arrests that were made under the two campaigns combined in 2010.

"Success of a campaign can be measured in many ways," said Alison Kirk, Community Relations Officer for OHS. "The decrease in DUI arrests may indicate that more people are using designated drivers or moving the party to home because they are taking notice of the high visibility enforcement

presence and that we mean what we say. We hope those who haven't taken notice or those who would risk the chance to drink and drive will make wiser choices in the future because DUI enforcement will continue." Kirk also points out that alcohol related fatalities made up 31% of the total motor vehicle crash fatalities for 2011, a decrease from 39% in 2010.

"Unfortunately, 32 families had to get that midnight call or knock at the door last year, letting them know a loved one would not be coming home because of someone's choice to drink and drive. Going into 2012, we will continue to partner with law enforcement and do all we can to combat impaired driving in our state so hopefully one day no one will have to get that tragic news of the loss of a loved one."

In addition to the 490 DUI arrests in 2011 during *Checkpoint Strikeforce* and *Safe Family Holiday* police issued: 97 citations for underage drinking violations, apprehended 302 wanted individuals, recovered 15 stolen vehicles and 11 weapons, made 251 drug arrests, arrested 157 persons for felonies, issued 396 citations for seat belt violations, 77 for child restraint violations, and 4,597 for other traffic violations.

During the Safe Family Holiday campaign, OHS conducted a variety of public awareness activities to educate the public about the dangers of drinking and driving. One of these projects, the DUI Tree, tracked alcohol-related deaths and injuries which occurred between Thanksgiving and New Year's in the State. Colored bulbs are placed on the trees, which were located in A.I DuPont, Kent General hospital, Dover Downs Hotel & Casino, Nanticoke hospital, Delaware Army National Guard Headquarters in Wilmington, and Beebe Medical hospital, to represent each victim of an impaired driving crash. Two people were killed in alcohol related crashes during the 2011 holiday season and 27 others were injured compared to the 2010 holiday season when 2 people were killed in alcohol-related

crashes and 57 others were injured. That means each of the 2011 DUI Victim's Trees had 2 red light bulbs and 27 green bulbs to represent the victims.

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